

Vet services

RAF Feltwell clinic provides care to members' pets

Story and photos by MSgt. Scott Martin
Public affairs

When it comes to veterinary care for pets, many people assigned here have probably considered using the services of a civilian veterinarian. One look in the Yellow Pages reveals there are many vets to choose from in East Anglia.

But pet owners here need not necessarily let their fingers do the walking when they can make the short drive to the U.S. Army veterinary clinic at RAF Feltwell — and it will probably cost them less to do it.

The clinic's primary animal medical mission is to serve the veterinary needs of the U.S. military working dogs in this country. But when they're not doing that, the clinic staff is available to treat pets of all kinds, even if only for a few days a week.

The clinic comprises one traveling doctor based at RAF Croughton, who shuttles among the U.S.-administered bases in Britain, two full-time workers and several volunteers. The staff offers many of the same

services any other veterinary clinic offers, but on a limited scale.

"(The doctor) comes up one day for surgery and one day for the clinic," said Chloe Sauls, the clinic's operations clerk. "We try to keep them to Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but there are no set days a week; just generally two days out of the week."

In that time, "we generally see about a hundred animals," said Army Sgt. Paul Mochmer, the clinic's veterinary technician.

For the most part, clinic services fall into two categories: vaccinations and surgeries, Mochmer said, "but we can't do a hundred surgeries in a day. We generally do two surgeries on a (day)."

When it comes to surgery, spaying and neutering are by far the most common procedures, said Army Capt. Brian Moore, U.S. Army Veterinary Detachment, United King-

dom/Ireland Division. But there are a variety of other services offered.

"We do some eye surgery, like exterior structures of the eye," he said. "We do tumor removals and second opinions a lot."

The doctor can also do dental work, but only at RAF Croughton, his main office, where the dental equipment is located.

One service the clinic staff cannot provide is X-rays, since it has no X-ray machine.

"If someone wants X-rays, they have to go to an off-base clinic," Moore said.

But not every pet owner visits the clinic for medical services. Because the clinic operates on a self-suf-

iciency basis, the staff sells a variety of pet-related products to help generate enough profit to keep the clinic open. These products include flea and tick shampoos, (heart) medicine, dips, house-treatment products, vitamins, ear-cleaning medicines and other items.

"We can't sell things like collars and leashes," Sauls said. "It has to be a medical item. It can't have anything to do with grooming or cosmetics."

Moore stressed people should understand the Feltwell clinic is only one of several bases in his area of responsibility, which covers all U.S.-administered military bases in the United Kingdom. That's why he's only available here two days a week. Only Sauls and Mochmer are at the clinic five days a week, to carry out the administrative functions required to keep the clinic running.

Except for emergencies, all pet care is done by appointment. Pet sick call is one day a week — the day varies according to the doctor's schedule — from 8 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Sauls is able to make appointments about a month ahead of time, and she emphasized people should make their appointments as soon as they can within that window.

The clinic staff has a current clientele of

Clinical appointments are available from 8 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. one day each week. Call Ext. 7097 to make an appointment.



Above, Capt. Brian Moore (left) examines Penny, a dog belonging to SSgt. David Yockey and his wife, Mandy. Left, Chloe Sauls stocks the medical care products available for sale at the RAF Feltwell veterinarian clinic.



Sgt. Paul Mochmer fills a hypodermic needle as he prepares to sedate a dog awaiting surgery. In the background, Capt. Brian Moore operates on another dog while clinic volunteer Amber Duke watches.

